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**United States Foreign Policy Options Toward Germany: What is the impact of Vladimir Putin's
Recent Engagement of Germany**

by

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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ABSTRACT

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Over the last three and a half years Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder have developed a relationship that has brought the two countries closer foreign relation ties. At the same time relations between the United States and Germany have come to an all time low since the end of the Cold War with top Bush Administration Cabinet Members calling the relationship between the two "poisoned". This paper will serve to determine whether Putin's engagement has been the cause for this recent fall out between Germany and the United States, or merely coincidental. In light of significant issues concerning anti-missile defense, Russia's interaction with NATO, and the global war on terrorism, if these issues are not addressed, the United States may face a difficult way ahead. Strained relations between Germany and the United States are particularly important as the United States wrestles with a contemplated attack on Iraq. This paper will not only show if Putin is trying to use this as an opportunity to further the rift; it will also provide recommendations on how the United States might modify its current foreign policy in an attempt to reengage its once strong ally.

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PREFACE

I wish to thank Colonel Josef Heinrichs of the Bundeswehr and my seminar mate from Seminar 12 for his assistance with gaining translated German documents

UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS TOWARD GERMANY: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RECENT ENGAGEMENT OF GERMANY

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the United States of America's foreign policy towards the Federal Republic of Germany, and examine the current rift between the two world powers. The paper will seek to determine whether this deterioration is a direct or indirect result of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin's, recent engagement of Germany since he took office in March 2000.

The thesis is that Vladimir Putin's determination to draw closer to Europe, and more specifically, to the leading partner within the European Union, the Federal Republic of Germany, has caused foreign relations between United States and Germany to deteriorate. By examining United States foreign policy toward Germany, recently stated policies by Germany toward the United States, and Vladimir Putin's interesting background as a KGB agent in the former Soviet Union while stationed in Germany and his relationship with Germany and their Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, an evaluation will be made. Based on this evaluation we will seek to prove or disprove a connection between Putin's engagement of Germany since 2000 and the alarming turn of events in recent United States/German relations. Upon completion of the evaluation, recommendations will be made to describe possible solutions to the present situation.

BACKGROUND

UNITED STATES AND GERMANY SINCE WORLD WAR II

United States foreign policy toward Germany since the end of World War II can be characterized as a priority within Europe based on the country's location on the continent, military stature as a member of NATO and significant economic position within the EU.¹ Beginning with the Potsdam Agreement of 1945 between the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, the relationship with Germany began to develop in a positive fashion from the ashes of World War II. The United States did not intend to seek retribution and destroy German industry as was championed by Secretary of Agriculture Henry Morgenthau in the Morgenthau Plan. Quite the contrary, both Presidents Roosevelt and Truman chose to rebuild it. In order to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining a strangle hold over the continent, United States interest in Germany was keen. The United States policy began to take on two complementary directions; containing the Soviet Union while at the same time containing and reassuring the Federal Republic of West Germany (FDR).² While these policies at first brought

reassurance to the FDR, at the same time, the Germans began to question the rationale for having the United States present in their country merely for the reason of containing the Soviet Union. They were not able to have their own nuclear deterrent and with the almost certain mutual destruction of all parties on the European continent, particularly Germany, in the event of war with the Soviet Union, the country began to experience friction with the United States during the 1960s and 1970s.

Although the 1980s ushered in an era where relations between the FDR and the United States became less than perfect, with a faltering economy which directly led to devaluation of the dollar, a growing trade deficit between the United States and its European allies and Group of Five trading partners (FDR, United States, France, United Kingdom and Japan), and general malaise between FDR and United States on the economic front, the bond still continued due to the containment policies against the Soviet Union. Nonetheless a new sense of independence from the United States was truly in full bloom.³ With the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev, and the possibility that the Soviet Union would collapse due to economic weakness and the failure of Marxism, United States-German relations took on a fresh new outlook. With the rapid changes in East Germany during the summer of 1989, and the subsequent fall of the Berlin Wall, the United States was the first to openly embrace the concept of a reunified Germany. The United States wanted the new Germany to be a full fledged member in all security and economic treaties and pacts (to include NATO) and welcomed the idea of Germany immediately becoming the dominant power once again in Europe.⁴

With a reunified Germany, the United States began to redefine its role to best support the new political environment that evolved during the weakening and the eventual fall of the Soviet Union. During the early 1990s Germany saw the United States as more of a partner because its role in NATO was now a security related involvement in European Affairs thus reassuring Germany that the United States would not be isolationist with the Soviet threat gone. As the leader in accepting a unified Germany as a member of NATO, entertaining thoughts of allowing other Baltic states to join the NATO alliance, and the importance it attached to their "partners in leadership" relation, the United States showed Germany that their foreign relations were paramount for the future.⁵ Today Germany is firmly established in the framework of the President's National Security Strategy. Germany plays an integral part in the economic growth of Europe and the world as a member of the Group of Eight (G-8) partnership.⁶ Germany also routinely influences practices and procedures of the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, and participates in the global war on terrorism through active support of NATO's theme of collective defense for all members.⁷

Still more impressive, the United States and Germany maintain a diverse cultural and economic position within each other's respective countries. This is based primarily on the forward posting of United States forces in Germany and the employment of over one-half million employees in industries in each respective country (Americans in German firms and Germans in American firms). There is also considerable educational exchange, cultural interaction and mutual tourism as well. Finally, with the reunification of Germany over the last decade, and the assistance provided by the United States in enabling the process, the two countries promote even stronger ties which do not always end in total understanding but highlight why this relationship is so vital.⁸

Gerhard Schroeder's election as Chancellor of Germany in 1998, signaled a new turn for the country as it has become more visible in the world forum in providing military troops to operations around the world. Schroeder, a Social Democrat, is characterized as a leader who acts for what he feels is best for Germany. He does not feel that the country should remain tied to its past and has espoused the values of Germany within the European Union, although he realizes that EU is a great mechanism for championing the causes of his own country. His decision to send forces to support operations in Kosovo and Macedonia in 1999 signaled a change to the foreign policy established by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and prior German Chancellors which stated that German troops would not serve in a country that had been conquered by Germany in World War II. This policy on the surface showed that Germany had assumed a new position for accepting responsibility in Europe, assisting the United States by lightening its load for supporting operations directly affecting the European Community.⁹ As the Global War on Terrorism began after the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, Germany stood firmly with the United States. Once the attacks were proven to be committed by elements from outside of the United States, the German Bundestag supported the commitment of German forces under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This led to a monumental deployment of German Soldiers in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. For the first time armed German forces supported operations against a foe outside of Germany, and performed a role other than peace keeping or peace making operations. Since supporting the armed conflict against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, Germany firmly showed its close ties to the United States and demonstrated its responsibility as an important world power.¹⁰

VLADIMIR PUTIN AND HIS RISE TO POWER

Recently, the President of the Russian Federation of States, Vladimir Putin, instituted positive, striking policy advances toward Germany, similar in significance to those of Mikhail Gorbachov during the early 1990s. Putin's interesting background and relationship with Germany provides some insight as to why he shares a unique penchant toward the country and the people. Putin attended the State University in St. Petersburg (Formerly Leningrad), and studied law. A typical student attending the university, Putin was an avid Judo enthusiast and wanted as his final goal to be placed within the Committee for State Security, better known by its Russian initials as the KGB.¹¹ Putin was eventually approached by a KGB recruiter in his fourth year at the University and he was finally able to realize his boyhood dreams.¹² Putin's initial assignment in late-1975 was to the Secretariat of the Directorate at KGB headquarters in Moscow followed by training in the counterintelligence division in St. Petersburg where he began to earn a reputation as a no-nonsense, hard working professional. It is also during this time period that he joined the Young Communist League (Komsomol) as a prelude to becoming a full-fledged member of the Communist Party.¹³ Putin states that correctly joining the party was a mandatory requirement and to become an intelligence agent one had to complete this prior to turning 25.

After further intelligence training , Putin attended the prestigious Andropov Red Banner Institute. There he was further identified as an officer with very great potential, with outstanding organization capabilities, but at the same time an officer who appeared withdrawn and uncommunicative.¹⁴ This unremarkable appearance would bode well for him in the future, especially during the Presidential elections of 1999. Many Russians perceived him to have the common touch, to be "just like everyone else", which when taken in comparison to the charismatic Boris Yeltsin, would be a welcome sign to most.¹⁵ It is also at this time that he realized that he was being groomed for duties in Germany. He did not know initially if he would be posted in the FDR or in East Germany (German Democratic Republic (GDR)). He quickly figured out that going to the FDR would require additional years working at the KGB headquarters within one of the directorates. On the other hand, if he chose to go to the GDR he could go right away and although it was not the West, the quality of life and potential for a career enhancing duty assignment appeared to be better than if he remained in the Soviet Union. With that he and his new wife embarked for their initial posting to the KGB station in Dresden, GDR.¹⁶

Upon moving to the KGB Station in Dresden, Putin's first position within the foreign intelligence service was as a case officer. A case officer routinely met with contacts; they would

meet during the course of their day to day operations. According to the account in his memoir, First Person, Putin's initial impression of Germany was that it was a very clean country and that food stuffs and basic purchased goods were in great abundance. Putin makes a point of the fact that he gained weight immediately due largely to the German beer he would purchase in the local town of Radeburg close to where he lived.¹⁷ As his tour continued, Putin was promoted to the Assistant Station Chief, the number two man at the station. He remarked that conditions grew worse during the five years of his assignment to the KGB in Dresden (1985-1990). As the Berlin Wall fell and borders opened, he watched as the East German people destroyed the Ministry of Security (MGB) or East German secret police. He understood why they were angry due to some of what he called misconceptions about the MGB's purpose. He also lamented the gradual collapse of the Soviet Union.

Putin's most significant experience came as East Germans were surrounding the KGB station and readied to go in and destroy it. Putin called Moscow for military assistance, but the Soviet Union would not send troops to assist. He likened this to the beginning of the end and thought it was hard to accept that the Soviet Union had lost its place as a world power and dominant force, specifically within Eastern Europe.¹⁸ Although Putin speaks widely of his service to the KGB as an intelligence officer throughout First Person, some refute that he was merely in charge of an insignificant post in the Department for the Security of the Constitutional Regime within Dresden and this is why he was removed from active duty upon returning back from Germany.¹⁹

With the fall of the Soviet Union, Putin now turned his attention away from the intelligence field and more toward government affairs. He began by developing a relationship with the Mayor of St. Petersburg, Anatoly Sobchak. While in Saint Petersburg he served first as the head of external relations and then as the Deputy Mayor in March of 1994. This inaugurates his career in the political arena. During his tenure as Deputy Mayor he was accused of some less than ethical business practices involving the trading of oil products, which was indicative of the political-economic dealings in the new Russia. When Sobchak was defeated in 1995, Putin left St. Petersburg and quickly received a position within the Yeltsin Administration.²⁰ He caught the eye of Yeltsin's Chief of Staff, Anatoly Chubais, and initially served as the head of Presidential Monitoring and subsequently as the Deputy Chief of Staff. Here he began to develop an understanding of domestic and foreign policy issues. Putin understood the importance of establishing a hierarchy in Moscow that was in touch with domestic affairs in the Russian provinces, and foreign affairs. He was particularly interested in curbing the wide spread corruption that had emerged following the fall of the Soviet Union.²¹

Putin's meteoric rise within the Yeltsin Administration continued as he assumed the position of Director of the Federal Security Service or FSB. The FSB was the new Russian Federation follow-on to the KGB. Even though he did not particularly want to take on the position he knew it was important to the administration. Putin, almost ten years removed from his service in the KGB, was the first civilian to take over the position.²² While assigned as the director to the FSB, Putin was charged with completing several cases against persons that were close to the Yeltsin Administration.²³

The next position would bring Putin into the world forum. In August of 1999, Yeltsin fired the newly appointed Prime Minister, Sergi Stepashin. Putin had followed Stepashin into the previous position of Director of the FSB. Yeltsin had been, in a round about way, trying to find his successor for years by placing a man in the number two position who could best serve as President. Yeltsin would typically blame all of the problems of state inevitably on six of the seven prime ministers he appointed during his Presidency.²⁴ The seventh, Putin himself, would be described by Yeltsin to the nation on television as "a prime minister with a future".²⁵

As the new Prime Minister, Putin would have the second Chechen War (the first taking place 1994-1995) to contend with as his number one priority. Beginning with the invasion of Chechen rebels into the neighboring province of Dagestan, and explosions in apartment buildings in Moscow and other Russian cities executed by Chechen rebels that resulted in the death of over 300 Russian citizens, Putin was fully engaged in the crisis that had besieged the Yeltsin administration.²⁶ Putin would seize this opportunity to carry the battle to the Chechens and rally the country behind the cause. Rather than try to operate from Moscow, Putin frequently visited commanders in the field to gain an appreciation for the situation and the war which had caused hundreds of Russian soldiers to die in the province and streets of the capital, Grozny.²⁷ With Putin in the position of Prime Minister, the Russian Army would execute one of its bloodiest campaigns both in Dagestan and in Chechnya, showing that Putin indeed would not show any weakness and that he would direct the Army to use extreme measures as a means to its end.²⁸ With Yeltsin's popularity at an all time low, and under pressure to resign for health reasons, Yeltsin on the last day of the 20th Century stepped down and appointed Putin as acting President until the elections that would follow in March 2000.

Putin had no previous experience as an elected official prior to the elections of March 2000. The new elections would bring to office a man who many in Russia liked to think of as an ordinary man, who was very different from his predecessor Boris Yeltsin. Previously in September 1999, a new Party known as the Unity Party was formed to challenge the majority

communists in the Russian legislature but also to provide a fresh new alternative to the Fatherland–All Russia Party which had been formed by the popular Yevgeny Primakov, the former Prime Minister. The Unity Party was widely thought to be the party of Putin and made great headway in challenging the results of the 1999 Russian legislative elections. When the legislative results came in the Unity Party captured 23.3 percent of the vote to rival the majority Communist Party's 24.3 percent of the vote. Thus the stage was set for the acting President to win the early elections in March. On Election Day Putin emerged as President by a popular margin of 52.9 percent to his leading opponent Gennady Zyuganov's 29.2 percent.²⁹ The moment's significance was even greater since this was the first time in Russian history that the presidency had transitioned from one leader to another in a democratic manner.

Once established as the President, the former "Grey Cardinal",³⁰ as Putin was known to colleagues and acquaintances, based on his reserved, business-like manner in the past, suddenly became viewed as an excellent public speaker in the world forum. This was particularly noticeable when addressing important issues of foreign policy. Putin has taken a stand that Russia's prominence in the world begins with "robust nationalism", or pride in one's country. This pride had seemingly disappeared since the end of the Soviet Union.³¹ With Putin, Russia finally had a leader who did not owe any favors to either the elected elite in the Duma or any other interest group since he had been elected on the premise that he was ordinary and looking out for the country's best interest. He would try to establish a new Russia that would be on the road to becoming a major power once again. As mentioned earlier, Putin was aware of the fact that Russia's former dominance was waning and that it would continue to falter until national pride could be restored. This was evident since his days in KGB in East Germany, when he saw the Berlin Wall fall and Eastern Europe left free to choose the direction in which it wanted to go with no interference from the Soviet Union or subsequently from the new democratic Russia. This was exactly the course Putin would try to correct.

As Putin began his initial months in office, he charted a course that showed his sincere intent to promote Russia as a reemerging power. This power would be based more upon diplomatic methods rather than relying on the number of nuclear warheads in the Russian arsenal. He firmly believed that the foreign policy landscape did not need to be a uni-polar world dominated by the United States. His early dealings with China and North Korea showed that although he wanted to be considered western or European, he did not want to do this at the expense of a weakened Russia. He was strongly supportive of a multi-polar world and did not want to see the United States' Global Missile Defense (GMD) plan become a reality unless Russia had a say or the means to modify the United States plan for the program. This would

force Russia to spend part of its already meager budget on measures to counter-balance the United States' GMD. To do this, Putin chose to continue to support efforts within the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council inside NATO. Furthermore, Putin saw no reason why Russia at some time in the future could not become a full fledged member of NATO given its desire to be viewed as part of Europe rather than an Eurasian nation.³²

PUTIN'S ENGAGEMENT OF GERMANY

It is evident that Putin's initial policies were grounded in his German experiences. Putin notes that he was particularly fond of former German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard's concept for reconstructing the country by repairing national moral values first, considered as a prerequisite for a return to greatness.³³ Erhard had urged the economic reconstruction of West Germany after World War II and was given a chance by United States officials to head up the reconstruction efforts following the war. Erhard's main tenets included supporting a socially responsive market economy which championed free trade and privatization, aided by the United States sponsored Marshall Plan, and finally the installation of a new currency which could provide legitimacy to the West German economy.³⁴ At the same time he took a lesson from Nazi Germany and remained determined that extremism within a country would threaten its vital security interests.³⁵

It would also come as no surprise that Russian public opinion favors Germany as its greatest friend in the world forum. Over 80 percent of the Russian public thinks highly of Germany versus 48 percent for the United States. Additionally, the Russians show great confidence in Germany's ability to act responsibly in the world forum when compared to the United States.³⁶ It is no wonder that Putin would choose to engage Germany, even though he has shown a strong tendency to look toward engagement with the United States since the 9-11 terrorist attacks. The German public has seen the recent initiatives Putin has taken to reach out to Germany since he has become President. This has brought him widespread popularity within Germany.³⁷ What is the impact of this new relationship between Russia and Germany as a result of Putin's initiatives, and how does it impact United States foreign policy toward Germany?

THE SUMMITS: PUTIN AND SCHROEDER

As the first Soviet or Russian Head of State to address the German Parliament or Bundestag, Vladimir Putin made a historically-significant point as he addressed the legislators, first in Russian and then in German, on September, 25th, 2001. Using the September 11th

terrorist attacks on the United States as a backdrop, Putin stated when speaking of terrorists, that, “we can leave them no peace,” and that we must seek “the complete political and ideological isolation” of terrorists.³⁸ In one speech he was able to squarely align himself with the West on the terrorism subject and make everyone almost forget about the war in Chechnya, which he proclaims is his own country’s war on terrorism. The impact of the new German-Russian relations were apparent even before the speech, based on his understanding of Germany and its people. Putin’s position of fostering positive relations with Germany would become clear early in his tenure as President.³⁹

An example of Putin’s early engagement of the German Government is provided by his favorable relationship with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. These two men began meeting frequently at Putin’s insistence soon after he became President. The first summit between the two took place in Germany during June 2000. Out of the summit came a series of oil and gas agreements worth billions of dollars to both countries. More symbolically, both men laid wreaths at the tomb of fallen Soviet soldiers in Berlin as the summit ended, to show that their relationship had positively developed during the course of their meetings.⁴⁰ After this first meeting Putin would hold four additional bi-lateral summit meetings with the German Chancellor in less than a year.

Schroeder went on record in April 2001 to the effect that he would act in Europe’s name to receive Putin’s assurances that another division of the continent would be avoided. Schroeder’s policy of “European Ostpolitik”, similar to the Ostpolitik of former Chancellor Willy Brandt some thirty years ago, reaches out to Russia to help it establish political and economic inroads that could speed membership into the World Trade Organization or NATO.⁴¹ Schroeder also readily acknowledges that he has not established the same kind of personal rapport with President George Bush that he has with Putin.⁴² Another example of German-Russian cooperation brought about during the visit was a commitment from Putin and Schroeder for both the German and Russian Navies to participate in a combined exercise in the Baltic Sea. This is the first exercise of this type.⁴³ The Bundeswehr, in its current briefings, also point to cooperation with Russia as a central element of the overall concept for promoting security and stability for Europe. German Political-Military strategy seeks to keep Russia involved in the Euro-Atlantic security area, noting the chance to begin a new era of quality cooperation between the two countries. By supporting Putin in undertaking cooperative security arrangements the German government believes that the military and political elite within Russia will move beyond Cold War thinking, a primary concern of Germany’s.⁴⁴

In the Fall of 2002 following the summit in Berlin, Schroeder again championed Putin by softening his rhetoric on several issues on which he previously held a hard line. First he changed his position on Putin's control of the electronic media in Moscow. Initially he publicly challenged Putin's handling of the media when in essence the Russian leader censored and rebuked press outlets that looked unfavorably on operations in Chechnya. Specifically, Schroeder did not come to the aid of the only independent radio station *Ekho Moskvy*, when Putin tried to impose controls. He further supported Putin, and received Polish backing, for not allowing a Chechen representative to attend the Parliamentary Assembly of Europe without the consent of the Russian delegation. This not only showed strong support for Russia but directly went against the United States position concerning the Chechen problem.⁴⁵

The summit in April 2002, was perhaps the most productive meeting to date. As a prelude, Putin asked the Russian Parliament to release German medieval stained-glass windows that were looted at the end of World War II. The Russian Parliament quickly passed the bill even though many insist that the windows could be considered reparations for the damage inflicted on German forces during World War II.⁴⁶ As the two men ended two days of discussion, the German Chancellor reduced Russia's debt owed by the old Soviet Union to less than ten percent of the original four billion dollar total.⁴⁷ Schroeder and Putin also agreed on major foreign policy issues, to include a common understanding that intervention in Iraq would require United Nations concurrence, allowing greater influence for Russia with the NATO countries while demonstrating that Germany doesn't have to call the United States prior to making important foreign policy decisions.⁴⁸

The most recent summit in Oslo, Norway in November 2002 continued to expand the strong ties that have been building between the two countries. Originally scheduled to take place in Moscow on October, 23, 2002, the meeting was postponed due to the Chechen hostage taking crisis in Moscow. With this as a backdrop, Schroeder came on line with full support for Russia's efforts to combat terrorism and encouraged continuation of the political process that Putin had exhibited to deal with the crisis. Putin described the Chechen situation as complex and thanked Germany for its support throughout the crisis.

Another key area which earned thanks for Schroeder at the summit was his assistance in garnering EU support at the tenth Russia-EU conference for initiatives concerning Kaliningrad, the Russia port that serves as an industrial bridge between the EU and Russia.⁴⁹ Kaliningrad borders Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic Sea. Lithuania and Poland will be accessing into the EU and as such the Russians are greatly concerned that their citizens would be prevented from easy transit between Russia and the region. Germany took the lead in crafting the joint

statement issued by the EU during the November 2002 summit stating that Lithuania would ensure the continued free transit of goods and services between the Russian Federation and the Kaliningrad by rail and ground transit.⁵⁰ Schroeder also maintained that continued efforts in the development of energy are “of strategic importance for the two countries”. Both countries and particularly Germany, understand the importance of the vast oil and natural gas reserves that Russia can provide. Finally Putin pledged to take part in the opening ceremonies of the Year of Russian Culture in Germany in February 2003 and declared that “Russia is ready to do its utmost to make the year 2004 the Year of German Culture in our country.”⁵¹

Germany has continued to do much to assist Russia since Putin assumed the Presidency, and the two countries share many striking similarities. Realizing that Russia now has an economic relevance on par with the Netherlands based on GNP (although it still maintains vast supplies of raw materials), and the impending admission of Poland and three Baltic States to the EU, Germany’s ties to Russia are of great importance in the face of an emerging uni-polar world where the United States reigns supreme.⁵² Germany and Russia are now converging in their thought and power base in such a way that they are now exercising their own spheres of influence among the countries of central and eastern Europe so that these countries no longer have a free reign as they might have had if the two countries had not chosen this path of engagement. Where as both of these countries were trying to establish themselves after the dramatic actions of the late 1980s and 1990s, they seem to be developing a new order with Germany squarely as the leader of the EU despite recent economic downward trends, and Russia determining its strategic interests in the Confederation of Independent States (CIS) and Western Europe.⁵³

THE RIFT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GERMANY

As the engagement and relationship between Putin and Schroeder blooms, there have been some striking developments in Germany’s relationship with the United States. Schroeder began to take on a new stance towards the United States over the past 12 months. Many attribute this to the recent German elections where he was reelected as Chancellor, but some of this may be traced to Schroeder’s early background as part of a group characterized as the “Generation of 1968” or “68ers” and on his membership in the Social Democrats youth wing. The Social Democratic youth wing, which Schroeder headed up in the late 1960’s, was described as Marxist in orientation, and many times was viewed as vehemently anti-American. Schroeder himself also acted as a defense lawyer to a member of the Red Army terrorist group. The group’s basic tenant focused on Anti-American rhetoric, but more specifically against the

American Military presence in Germany and the eventual use of nuclear weapons on the continent if provoked by the Soviet Union. Today some of this Anti-American tendency can still be seen in some parts of Schroeder's Social Democratic Party and among the Greens, the party of the German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer.⁵⁴

The German Media and Schroeder's handlers during the recent election were probably most responsible for the rift as the new "German Way", or a more independent approach to foreign policy came to light. Some felt that Schroeder's harsh criticism of the United States was not necessary as it was seemingly pompous to think that Germany had a more responsible view of how to handle world affairs than the United States. Whereas the United States relies on the traditional four pillars of national power: political, military, economic and informational, German policy, recently reinforced by Schroeder, concentrates national power upon political and economic tenets. Most of the political and economic emphasis is on the immediate surroundings of Germany as a powerful, centrally located country within the continent. Military intervention, particularly with German soldiers, is unpopular at home and makes some others uneasy with the memories of World War II. German interests are always held paramount and many times other issues of international importance are held in low regard if they do not directly effect the borders or economic input of Germany.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, at the same time Schroeder has allowed the deployment of over 10,000 soldiers abroad since he assumed office, which is the most any country has committed to military operations abroad excluding the United States.⁵⁶

The United States' Global Missile Defense Plan also provoked strained relations. After Schroeder's summit meeting with Putin in April 2002, besides agreeing that the Russians needed to be involved in the discussions on the United States' Global Missile Defense Plan, he also went on to state that he would not be a "go between" for Russia and the United States after a bout of mutual expulsions of purported spies.⁵⁷ This came on the heels of US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's speech on missile defense in Germany three weeks prior, where he failed to acknowledge Russia or its delegates at the conference in a move that demonstrates the United States had no immediate desire to move toward a compromise as the Germans had proposed.⁵⁸

The Iraq issue has also become significant. During the recent elections in Germany, Schroeder time and again stated that Germany would not participate in a military campaign. He even mentioned that if the United Nations were to sanction an attack, Germany still would not participate.⁵⁹ When the United States Ambassador stated his concerns to Schroeder he continued to make his stance stronger on his campaign stops, insisting there would be no German support of the United States' initiatives. In the wake of increased Anti-Americanism,

this campaign ploy served to help Schroeder shed his party's 10 point deficit in the polls despite a German unemployment rate of 10 percent. Additionally, it left many nations within the EU puzzled, in their efforts to speak with one voice on specific foreign policy issues. The German leader had decided to chart his own course without consulting the other member nations. This may have been a clever attempt to win votes at the polls, but it also served to widen the gap between the United States and Germany more than any other event in recent times.⁶⁰

Further complicating the Iraq issue were the alleged comments by the German Justice Minister Herta Daeubler-Gmelin, just days before the election, that President Bush's strong arm tactics against Iraq were just a diversion from pressing domestic issues and that this was similar to what Hitler had done. Even though Schroeder apologized, and the minister denied the statement and was dismissed from office, the Bush administration continued to act coldly.⁶¹ The election in Germany revealed that the theme of Anti-Americanism holds new resonance with the German electorate, which Schroeder capitalized on in crafting his position on Iraq. The combination of jealousy and resentment of American military and economic might has contributed to what has been called recently "the Axis of Envy" by Josef Joffe, the editor of *Die Zeit*.⁶² The other factor is the wide spread unfavorable opinion of Bush which currently permeates Europe. Bush is pictured in many political cartoons in cowboy hat and boots, as he deals with the Iraqi President Hussein. This becomes further aggravated in the mind of the average German when Vice-President Richard Cheney and others make statements that the UN weapons inspections are useless and that the United States will have to act alone.

German businessmen are recognizing the growing rift between the two countries, and they want it stopped. A major German business association, BDI, states that the rift must come to a halt because the automobile industry, which is deeply affected by the United States market, is threatened. One in seven jobs within Germany is directly linked to the automobile industry and the results would be dramatic if additional tariffs emerge from the current situation.⁶³

German foreign policy towards the United States in the aftermath of the elections can be characterized as on the rebound but that still leaves major concerns. It is important to note that anti-American prejudice in Europe or anti-European prejudice in America will not help the current situation. The German government proposes six areas for improvement. First, the Germans agree fundamentally with the United States on the Iraq issue that Hussein's methods are wrong and that he is a brutal dictator. The means to deal with him should be as stipulated in UN Security Council resolution 1441, which established further weapons inspections. There is an understanding that if the inspections bear no fruit, the United States with UN approval may act to change the regime. Given UN approval, Schroeder will probably live up to his obligations

and allow the United States certain military support requirements as designated in NATO agreements.

Secondly, the discord has been mainly between the United States and Germany and not the EU. The German government realizes that the majority of the American population supports military option for Iraq with UN approval and allied support, where only a minority of the population would support the military option in Germany. Thirdly, Germans do not like war in general as a result of what transpired as a result of World War II. The Germans believe in foreign policy multilateralism through such institutions as the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Only multilateral means will suit their needs for solving issues involving intervention. On the other hand Germans are convinced the EU should play a larger regional role, with the Untied States left to take on global tasks. Germans as a whole are less inclined to increase their military outlays (this is no surprise in light of their recent economic troubles), are less convinced that they must take an active role in global affairs and are unwilling to use military power against Iraq even if they are found to have weapons of mass destruction.

Fourth, the Germans have made great headway in supporting international military actions as a result of treaties or in support of the global war on terrorism. Witness the 10,000 German soldiers deployed around the world. Fifth, Iraq is not the only problem causing the rift. The United States still has great issue with both the Kyoto Treaty and the International Criminal Court which it feels has the potential to diminish its sphere of influence and power. Finally, too much of the American press and thus American popular opinion is susceptible to "Eurobashing". On one hand the United States supports European cohesion in the form of the EU and other organizations, but on the other hand does not want its own superpower status threatened. On another note, as the United States wields its superpower status it may disregard the opinions of other countries if they do not agree with the US position.⁶⁴

American foreign policy has continued to remain steady yet strained in regard to Germany. The disagreement remains on how to deal with Iraq. In a recent interview with Secretary Colin Powell and German Foreign Minister Fischer, Powell reiterated that the United States is being more than fair in its dealings with Iraq. Following UN resolution 1441, the United States has continued to remain patient while the inspectors do their work. At the same time Powell reiterates that President Bush wants to continue to pursue diplomatic measures, to include the UN Security Council. He points out that his speech to the UN Security Council and the tolerance he has shown validates his willingness. Although Powell believes that relations between Germany and the United States are not poisoned, he does acknowledge that from time

to time there are disagreements between friends and allies and that he is committed to find ways together with Foreign Minister Fischer to solve these issues.⁶⁵

It is interesting to note that since the German elections there have been no bi-lateral meetings between Bush and Schroeder. This was addressed by National Security Advisor Rice when discussing the President's recent trip to NATO and Europe. When asked if the two leaders would meet, Rice stated that there would be no bi-lateral meetings at the NATO Summit and that Germany would have to decide for itself what to do if a UN Resolution is drafted calling for action against Iraq if resolution 1441 fails. With strained German-American relations over the Iraq issue, it is interesting to note that Bush did hold bi-lateral talks with the leaders of France, Turkey, the Czech Republic and Russia during the trip.⁶⁶

PUTIN'S INFLUENCE ON THE US-GERMAN RIFT: ONE FACTOR AMONG MANY?

In the first few years of Putin's Presidency it appeared on the surface as if his engagement of Germany had caused Germany to move away from dependency on the United States. Although the summits between Schroeder and Putin have yielded mutual benefits for both nations, there has not been an overt attempt by Putin to reach from his sphere of influence within the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe into Germany's purview within the EU. The tough initial rhetoric that Schroeder used in acting independently from the United States during the press conferences following several of the summits seems like a distant memory in light of recent world events.

Putin on the other hand has drawn closer to the United States in light of the Al Qaeda bombings of September 11th, and their common goal of eliminating terrorism. The relations between the United States and Russia, which once appeared strained over important foreign policy issues such as nuclear weapons, the United States Global Missile Defense and NATO enlargement have now improved as a result of the current issue facing both nations.⁶⁷ While Putin has warmed to the United States, and has ended a long standing resistance in regard to many issues, he is certainly by no means a follower of its policies to the letter. For instance, he continues to champion inspections as the means to an end in Iraq, although he will not prevent unilateral military action by the United States. He also continues to maintain friendly relations with the regime in North Korea during a time of increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula over North Korea's decision to ramp up its nuclear program.⁶⁸

In the long run, Russia's relationship with Germany, and more specifically with the EU, is less strategically significant than it is with the United States. The varied relations with the EU and Russia are born out of necessity due to their close geographical location. Invariably Russia

will continue to be viewed by the EU as an exporter of organized crime, illegal immigration and other undesirable activities instead of a trusted partner of strategic significance even though their trade reliance with one another is a major constant.⁶⁹ In fact, the rift between Germany and the United States, at least in recent times, can not be pinned on Putin's influence alone, and quite to the contrary, Putin supports many of the United States foreign policy positions in principle. Putin's recent support, indeed, is much more solid than Schroeder's when considering the tone of condemnation for the United States' potential regime change in Iraq by military means. Still, Putin continues to oppose precipitous military action by the United States without further UN inspections.

CONCLUSIONS

Although Putin has made a dramatic impact on the position of Russia in the world forum since assuming the office of President of the Russian Federation, it can not be conclusively shown that Putin is contributing to the rift between the United States and Germany. Putin and Schroeder share many similarities that on the surface may be more circumstantial than salient, but are important to note. These include:

- Both have early ties to Marxist thought
- Both champion a multi-polar world versus a United States dominated uni-polar world
- Both agree that the United States should not have a vote on all German and Russian Foreign policy concerns
- Both at least initially were against United States action in Iraq (the German Chancellor stating he would not support even with UN approval)
- They have worked to close important fiscal deals and symbolic issues dating from World War II (reparations debt reductions, returning lost artifacts, laying wreaths)
- They are embracing enlarged economic agreements benefiting both nations
- They have established large cultural agreements
- They have met with each other over 10 times during less than three years for bi-lateral talks and social engagements

Despite the close personal relationship between Putin and Chancellor Schroeder, the causes of the rift with the United States are basically the result of Germany's own action, or lack thereof in response to the cooling of relations with the United States. Putin, on the other hand, although opposed to a uni-polar world where the United States is the dominate world power has, if anything, grown closer to the United States during this period based largely upon his

support of the United States' global war on terrorism. He has taken many of these stands against the wishes of the military and political elites in Russia who still believe the only way to deal with internal problems is to take a hard stand against any country that remotely challenges Russia. On the surface, it could be perceived that Putin was trying to bring Russia back into the world forum as a dominant superpower, but he realized he had to first restore his own country's national pride, engage trading partners to help bolster the faltering Russian economy and make a case for his own police actions in Chechnya as his own war on terrorism. In all of these areas, Putin has made great strides.

The United States continues to pursue the global war on terror and remains on the brink of war with Iraq. This has been the primary point of contention between the United States and Germany, and cannot continue to be a divisive factor in the relationship with Germany. The United States, although viewed favorably in the eyes of most Germans, loses political and military leverage in the eyes of the German Government and its people when it continues to favor unilateral action in handling the Iraq issue. Critical assessments of the United States in Germany are much more widespread than even those from countries in the developing world.⁷⁰

Putin on the other hand has come out of the recent period as a respected and trusted ally of the United States, more so than at any time since World War II. By closely linking his own problems with Chechnya with the global war on terrorism, supporting the United States in passing UN Resolution 1441 and down grading Russia's nuclear arsenal, Putin has realized once again that economic stability and the establishment of national pride are a better solution than trying to continue on pace with the United States militarily. He can now step upon the world stage an American ally, a sought after trading partner by the EU and more specifically Germany, and a stabilizing force in Central Asia.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARDS GERMANY

With relations between the United States and Germany at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War, what policy direction changes should be undertaken to remedy the current situation? The first is to look for solutions, as Secretary Powell has stated. The United States need only to adhere to the current National Security Strategy concerning one of the leading premises President Bush espouses. The National Security Strategy states that we will preserve peace by building good relations among the great powers.⁷¹ Germany is certainly a great power and to continue letting differences fester, particularly on the Iraq issue, could almost certainly cause future foreign relations and economic friction. The Bush policy of being patient and

letting full inspections take place as directed by UN Resolution 1441, has gone a long way to improve popular opinion by showing his resolve for exploring diplomatic efforts.

Another course of action for the United States would be to ignore the current United States-German rift and see if Schroeder makes amends on his own. Schroeder has started this process by writing President Bush a letter apologizing for the recent remarks of Ms. Daeubler-Gmelin.⁷² Schroeder, sensing that Germany has much to lose, may change his tone by his own accord to avoid further economic and foreign relations crisis. Even though President Bush did not choose to hold bi-lateral talks with Schroeder during the recent NATO summit, it would be in his best interest to speak with Bush directly with great frequency. This is particularly important in light of his own recent troubles at home, where his Social Democrat rating is at its lowest since he was elected in 1998, and the Green Party, his coalition partner, is threatening to leave him due to the slumping economy, unemployment, and rising taxes.⁷³

Perhaps the best course of action at this juncture is to hold a summit immediately between Bush and Schroeder to tackle these differences head on. With both National Security Advisor Rice and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld describing American-German relations as poisoned,⁷⁴ the United States should understand the dire need to come to the table to foster the rebuilding of this close relationship between the two countries. Maybe Putin should also be invited. In this manner the United States will see if he is truly a supporter of strong relationships with the West or if he is in fact trying to develop a new balance of power by engaging Germany to seek independence of action from the United States on foreign policy issues.

In closing, the United States risks the compelling dilemma of losing a great ally in the fight against global terrorism if the current rift between the two world powers is not addressed. By closely following the United States' stated policies toward Germany and the great powers in the National Security Strategy and State Department policy documents, and if that fails, coming together in summit with the German leader Schroeder, the United States has the ability to stop the current crisis, avoid severe economic problems, and continue to serve as a highly regarded world-superpower.

Word Count = 8,354

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¹³ Putin, 47-48. The age group to join the Komsomol was 15 to 25 years of age. If one did not join the Komsomol they could not subsequently join the Communist Party. Exact ages taken from the Soviet Lexicon, written by Roy and Betty Laird in 1988 by Lexington Books. Most youth in the Soviet Union did join the Komsomol.

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²³ Tsyganov, 81.

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²⁶ Shevtsova, 90-92.

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difference is per Capita income. In using CRE and PPP respectively the Netherlands maintains a per Capita of \$24,317 and \$23,204. When CRE and PPP are used respectively for Russia, the per Capita is \$2,024 and \$7,503. This would indicate that with both measures used per Capita, and the small gap between comparisons between CRE and PPP for the Netherlands, the standard of living is measurably better than that of Russia.

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